

### Popular Applause

When you have it, what is it? It is difficult for any one to assign to it any element of substantiality, or to accord it any estimate of solid worth, nevertheless what a scramble there is among men of all professions for this loud mouthed offering of dearly beloved incense. To be singled out among our fellows for public praise, to hear men say, he is great or eloquent; to hear hand clapping, throat bawling and feet stamping; to see the crowd throng around you showering congratulations, to have men bow low on either side as your august person passes by,—ah, vanity, silken are thy snares, and a hollow mockery is all thine oblation. If you would be wise value the discreet approval of a friend, but hanker not after the running together of the multitude. It is a capricious and dangerous animal, that applauding multitude. One day it shouted, "Hosannas to the Son of David," and the next day it crucified him. Applause will die out but the envy and jealousy which it awakes live. The preacher who wins popular applause may well stop to inquire whether in that case *vox populi* is *vox dei*. Doubtless it is not. Doubtless it marks the moment when you ceased to exalt Christ, and began to exalt yourself. Whom God approves the world is far more apt to disapprove than praise.

### Dullness in the Pulpit

"I whisper, gracious God!  
What sin of mine could merit such a rod,  
That all the shot of dullness now must be  
From this thy blunderbuss discharged on me?"  
—Pope.

This is the impression made by pulpit dullness on an intelligent worldling, a man whose heart is as yet unresponsive to the divine influence, and who must be approached by the road of his intellect. A spiritually minded man, one whose appetite for heavenly things is keen, will not find any service dull. In any assembly where God is present his soul sits at a divine feast of love and joy, and in that heavenly aura even a dull sermon is glorified. But we preachers have to deal with a multitude who are not Christed, yet whom we hope to see renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost, and saved from temporal to spiritual things. These people are alive as yet only intellectually, and the service is bright or dull, an inspiration or a bore, a lift or a drag from that standpoint alone. It is manifest that to them dullness is not a means of grace, and if it is true that the great majority of sermons are dull, lifeless, without originality, without virile vigor, without the sparkle of intellectuality, perhaps we stumble right here upon one of the strong reasons why the unconverted masses do not attend church. If the reason is a tenable one, if the premises are sound and the conclusion logical, what a sin it is to be

dull in the pulpit? It is all the more a sin to the extent that it can be helped, and in a majority of cases it can be helped. We don't want to be hard on the preachers, but we would in love fling a hand full of sharp brambles into the comfortable places of that indolence or that indifference.

### To the Pastors of Indiana

We are not sure that this concerns *all* the pastors in the state of Indiana, but we hope it does. We refer to the announcement by Sister Frame in another column of this paper. Again Indiana takes the lead in a very important work. In conference assembled the sisters of that state decided to place a College Endowment Pledge in the hands of every local society and ask that the same be filled out for \$100 or more. Sister Frame makes an earnest appeal to the churches, especially to the pastors, to assist in this very important and urgent work. We trust the pastors will respond to this appeal and use their influence to get every society in that state to take one of these pledges. It will mean but six dollars a year if the pledge is written for \$100, and twelve dollars if given for \$200. It does not mean very much to you, but in the aggregate it does mean a great deal to our educational institution. Here is an opportunity to do something, tho small it be, that will tell for great things when the present generation shall have passed away. Of a *woman*, a dear, loving sister, one who served for the Master, it was said, "She hath done what she could." During all the centuries of the Christian era the sisters have lost none of that loving, loyal devotion to the Master which characterized the women of the early church. They have always been faithful, and we believe they will, in this hour of need, give their means, as they have already given their hearts, to the cause of religious education in the Brethren church. We hope also that other states will follow the example of Indiana until every society in the brotherhood will have taken one or more of these pledges.

### Christian Federation

In his sermon, New Year's day, the Rev. Joseph A. Vance of Baltimore made a vigorous plea for the repeal of sectionalism and division among the various religious bodies, in which he used the following language: "As a stepping-stone to this federation of Christendom, it will unite many of the present denominations in one organic body. The time for sensible Christian men to divide into sects over psalm singing and foot-washing has passed away."

It is significant and even amusing that when a man begins to talk about Christian federation, or denominational union, and incidentally of course refers to the points of difference which must be blotted out, his

selection will be entirely outside of his own creed. For example this Dr. Vance is a minister of the Southern Presbyterian Church, in which neither psalm singing nor foot-washing is practiced. Always and everlastingly the things which divide the church universal are the things which somebody else believes and practices. We wonder which one of the five points of Calvinism Brother Vance is willing to sacrifice to unity? "Oh yes, it is a good thing, this federation of the churches, and the quickest and shortest way to get at it is for everybody to believe and practice as I do. Your psalm-singing and your foot-washing is ridiculous anyway. Everything in fact is absurd which is not included in the creed and discipline of my church. Abandon your nonsensical notions and we will have Christian unity forthwith."

This is about the argument, at least this is what anyone can read between the lines. When denominationalism disappears we will have the millennium. For the present the best that can be done is to emphasize for charity's sake the great agreements, and cooperate as far as possible and as far as profitable in aggressive work. Yet even this cooperation is difficult in view of the very human tendency which often crops out even in holy places to engage in a competitive, and we may say disgraceful scramble over the fruits.

### Missionary Conventions

Within the last three weeks missionary conventions have been held at Sweet Home, Indiana, Milledgeville and Lanark, Ill., and at Waterloo, Iowa. This is evidence first, that our people are becoming more and more awakened on the subject of missions, and second, that they are longing to learn what the Bible really teaches on this subject. If ever we become an enthusiastic missionary people we do so by finding out what God really says on the subject of missions, and this we can learn only by a careful and prayerful study of the Word. We trust that the several conventions recently held may result in great good, not only in the way of contributions to the support of our missions, but especially in the moulding of sentiment, in the education of the people, and in bringing the church to a realization of the paramount importance of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. May the Lord bless the work of these conventions to his own glory to the upbuilding of Zion and to the welfare and salvation of lost souls.

As a father in a garden stoops down to kiss a child, the shadow of his body falls upon it. So, many of the dark misfortunes of our life are not God going away from us; but our heavenly Father stooping down to give us the kiss of his infinite and everlasting love.—*Talmage*.